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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001076

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2016
TAGS: KDEM PGOV PHUM PREL
SUBJECT: RCD/N PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ROGER LUMBALA, A
POTENTIAL SPOILER?

Classified By: Pol Intern DECorbin, reasons 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) Summary: On June 12, Pol intern met with Rassemblement
Congolais pour la Democratie - National (RCD/N) Presidential
candidate Roger Lumbala to discuss the candidate's
presidential vision in the run-up to the elections. The
meeting took place at Lumbala's house in Kinshasa, against
the backdrop of opposition Union for Democracy and Social
Progress (UDPS) protest rallies in the city. Members of the
RCD/N participated alongside the UDPS in the rallies. The
meeting was part of a series of meetings designed to gain
insight into the intentions of the smaller players in the
presidential elections in the run up to July 30. Lumbala
quickly implied that, though he has no real platform, he does
still have the power to disrupt the elections with violence
through his remaining armed forces in the provinces and his
alliance with Etienne Tshisekedi's UDPS. End Summary.

Background: Lumbala the Spoiler?

¶2. (U) There are 33 presidential candidates on the ballot for
July 30, few of whom are real contenders. Roger Lumbala,
although one of the minor candidates, has a disproportionate
disruptive potential. Lumbala played a role in the civil war
as a militia leader who, according to him, fought along side
the likes of vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba. Subsequently,
Lumbala became president of the RCD/N, a splinter group of
the RCD that he is heading in the upcoming elections. At the
beginning of the transition, Lumbala was named Minister for
External Trade in the Transitional Government. He was
removed from this position in 2005 amid charges of
corruption. (Note: He was subsequently replaced by his wife
Chantal Ngalula Mulumba. End Note.)

¶3. (U) When asked about his impressions of recent events and
his intentions concerning the June 29-July 30 campaign
period, Lumbala did not mince words: what the Congo needed
was a dialogue, not elections and the RCD/N was there to
organize and pay for it. Lumbala stated that, while everyone
agrees with the need for elections, they could not take place
without a dialogue. In addition, the imposition of the
elections at the will of the Independent Electoral Council
(CEI) President Abbe Apollinaire Malu Malu and the
International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT)
was unacceptable not only to the RCD/N but to the Congolese
people as well. This, he said, was evident by the day's
activities.

Security: He's Got it...I've Got it.

¶4. (C) Lumbala made numerous attacks on President Kabila
throughout the interview. In addition to comments on his
poor education, his general lack of capacity to govern, his
ethnicity and his poor French, Lumbala spoke of the
destabilizing influence in Kinshasa of the non-integrated
Special Presidential Security Guard (GSSP). Lumbala made
several references to the GSSP as the President's personal
militia, while referring to the fact that he had already
integrated all of his former RCD/N army into the FARDC. Yet,
later in the interview, perhaps after growing more
comfortable, Lumbala revealed that he may still have an army
at his disposition.

¶5. (C) When speaking of his intentions for security sector
reform, Lumbala cited his alleged close relations with the
principle actors in eastern DRC, from Ugandan President
Museveni to militia leader Peter Karim. His solutions for
reform were simple enough; through his personal contacts,
Lumbala could reason with the principle actors in the east to
end the continuing militia violence. He also stated that he
would accelerate FARDC integration by employing his former
skills as a general. Lumbala then went on to state that any
elements that would not deal with him directly could be dealt
with easily enough through a phone call to "one of (his)
men." When asked what he could mean by such a statement,
Lumbala repeated that he could have someone detained with a
simple phone call.

God and Family, That's All We Need

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¶6. (SBU) When asked about his proposed platform for the
upcoming electoral period, Lumbala stated that he has two
mottos: God and Family. Lumbala stated that he was first and
foremost a reformer in God's name. Lumbala also spoke at
length about the reform of the family being essential for the
country; from there, he stated, all of the other problems of
the Congo could be tackled. When pressed on specific
measures that he could offer the Congolese people, Lumbala
continually referred back to his core message of a
renaissance of the Congolese family, stating that that was
the only viable base from which to start.

Comment

¶7. (C) Lumbala essentially is a candidate watching the DRC
Presidential elections from the sidelines, but is someone to
watch for his spoiling potential. His views, however, as
reflected in this meeting are fairly typical of many of the
old-school Congolese politicians who are finding it difficult
to adapt to a new context. For too many, deals among the
political class elite (e.g. the desired "dialogue" in lieu of
elections) and intimidation tactics are more comfortable than
policy ideas and accountability before a voting public. With
a prospect of loss of influence as a result of elections,
further delays and/or accusations of western influence are
the only readily available options, and we are likely to hear
more such talk as the election campaign progresses. With all
Lumbala's tough talk, however, there has been no real
evidence of RCD/N-led disorder to this point, and it is
questionable to what extent Lumbala can mobilize forces to
generate significant problems.
MEECE